



## Communist University Introductions

*These texts may be used as “openings to discussion” of the original reading texts that are supplied by the CU. They are not intended to be authoritative or conclusive. They are contributions to discussion like any other such contributions. The introductions are not a substitute for the reading texts.*

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### Marx's Capital Volume 1, Part 6



# Force Decides

Capital, Volume 1 has 33 chapters. After Chapters 1, 2 and 3, on Commodities, Exchange and Money, and after Chapters 4 and 5, on the general form of Capital, the remainder of the book is a continuous development of the concept of Surplus-Value.

There are two main interruptions to this steady tempo, however. One is the long Chapter 10, called “The Working Day”. We will divide this big chapter into two. Please find attached, or download, and read Parts 1 to 4 of Chapter 10 via the link given below.

## Some notes on “The Working Day”

Marx ends the first section of the Chapter on “The Working Day” thus: ***“Between equal rights force decides.”***

In present-day “human rights” parlance, the opposite is held to be the case, but Marx is certainly correct. Capitalism is brutal. Equal “human” rights are a fiction in class-divided society.

*“Between equal rights force decides. Hence is it that in the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working-day, presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e., the working-class.”*

In the second section, Marx generalises the concept of Surplus Labour to all class-divided societies, thus:

*“Capital has not invented surplus-labour. Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the labourer, free or not free, must add to the working-time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working-time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production, [7] whether this proprietor be the Athenian \*\*\*\*\* [well-to-do man], Etruscan theocrat, civis Romanus, Norman baron, American slave-owner, Wallachian Boyard, modern landlord or capitalist.”*

Section 3 turns back to the most capitalist country that Marx knew, England, and tells stories of terrible horror having to do with people being worked to death,

including the well-known story of Mary-Anne Walkley, 20 years of age when she died.

Section 4, called Day and Night Work, deals with the “relay system”, summed up as follows:

*“The prolongation of the working-day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night, only acts as a palliative. It quenches only in a slight degree the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour. To appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production,”* says Marx.

The vampire thirst of capital for the living blood of labour is still in evidence.

**Illustration:** The “Wobbly” (IWW) version of the poster originally called “The Czar’s Wedding Cake”.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Capital V1, Chapter 10, The Working Day, parts 1 to 4.](#)
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Innocent-looking factory

## All bounds broken down

In the previous three sections of Chapter 10 of Capital, Volume 1, Karl Marx is concerned to show the unrestrained pressure for the “unnatural extension of the working day”.

*“Capital cares nothing for the length of life of labour-power. All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labour-power, that can be rendered fluent in a working-day. It attains this end by shortening the extent of the labourer's life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility,”* says Marx.

In a notable aside in **Section 5** on slavery, Marx remarks:

*“once trading in slaves is practiced, become reasons for racking to the uttermost the toil of the slave; for, when his place can at once be supplied from foreign preserves, the duration of his life becomes a matter of less moment than its productiveness while it lasts. It is accordingly a maxim of slave management, in slave-importing countries, that the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth.”*

Marx uses this remark on slavery to compare with capital, which he finds equally careless of life, and narrates how workers were terrorised into accepting these terrible conditions.

In **Section 6**, Marx records:

*“After capital had taken centuries in extending the working-day to its normal maximum limit, and then beyond this to the limit of the natural day of 12 hours, [98] there followed on the birth of machinism and modern industry in the last third of the 18th century, a violent encroachment like that of an avalanche in its intensity and extent. **All bounds of morals and nature, age and sex, day and night, were broken down.**”*

This is the Section that contains Marx’s account of the Chartists, some of whom he had befriended, and of their campaign for a Ten Hour Day.

At the beginning of **Section 7** Marx writes, in case we should forget:

*“The reader will bear in mind that the production of surplus-value, or the extraction of surplus-labour, is the specific end and aim, the sum and substance, of capitalist production, quite apart from any changes in the mode of production, which may arise from the subordination of labour to capital.”*

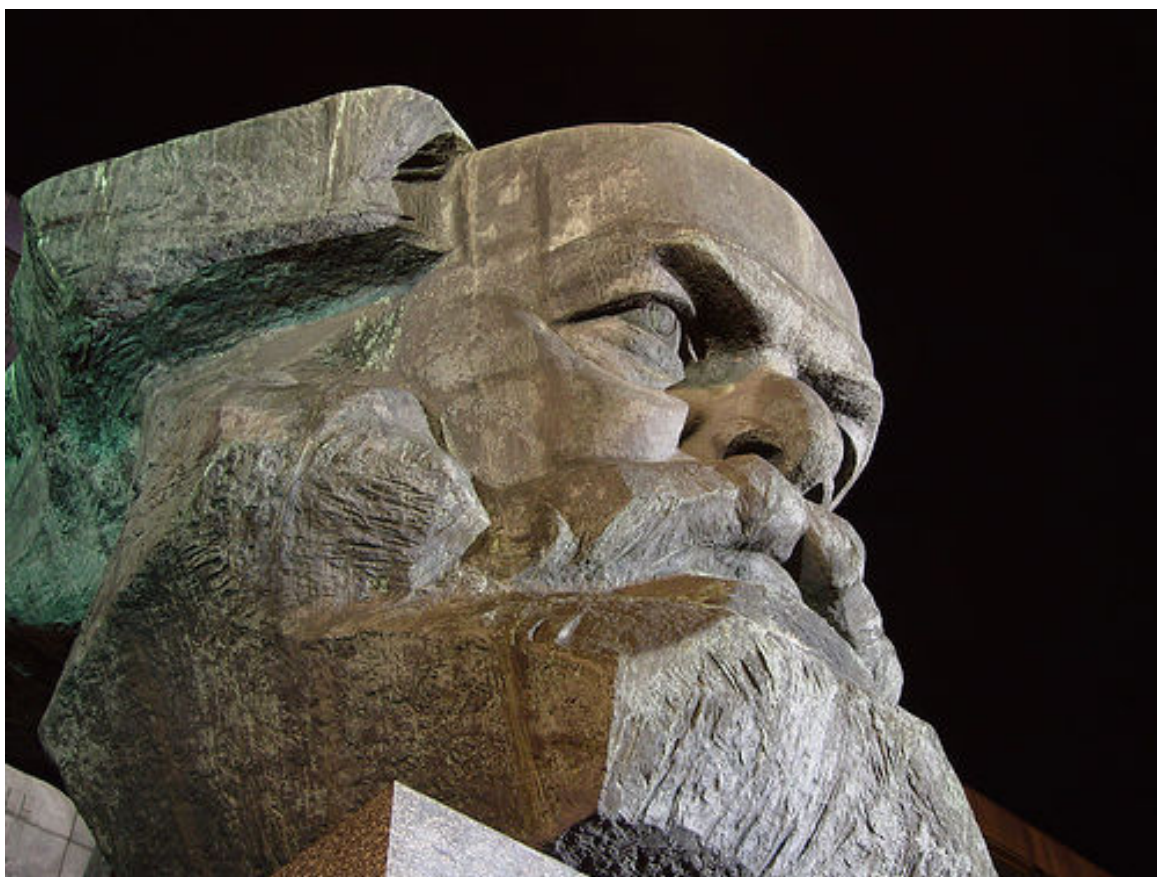
This section, two pages long, summarises the chapter on The Working Day, while also mentioning the US agitation for the 8 Hour Day, and the support it got from the International Working Men’s Association (the First International) of which Marx had been the founding Secretary.

The Working Day is a readable, prose chapter. Anyone can understand it.

**Image:** Johnson and Johnson factory, USA, 1886

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, Chapter 10, The Working Day, parts 5 to 7](#).





## Co-operation

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 of Capital, Volume 1 (attached; download linked below) which follow the enormous Chapter 10, are short, and require little introduction, because they are straightforward.

They are plain enough to provide plenty of material for study-circle discussion, especially if there are people with work-experience present.

Note that the co-operation that Marx writes about here is co-operation in general, whereby people work together under a capitalist. It is not about "co-ops" as such.

The following two excerpts demonstrate how well Karl Marx understood the workplace.

### Rate and Mass of Surplus Value

*"Within the process of production, capital acquired the command over labour, i.e., over functioning labour-power or the labourer himself. Personified capital, the capitalist, takes care that the labourer does his work regularly and with the proper degree of intensity."*

*“Capital further developed into a coercive relation, which compels the working-class to do more work than the narrow round of its own life-wants prescribes. As a producer of the activity of others, as a pumper-out of surplus labour and exploiter of labour-power, it surpasses in energy, disregard of bounds, recklessness and efficiency, all earlier systems of production based on directly compulsory labour.*

*“At first, capital subordinates labour on the basis of the technical conditions in which it historically finds it. It does not, therefore, change immediately the mode of production. The production of surplus value — in the form hitherto considered by us — by means of simple extension of the working day, proved, therefore, to be independent of any change in the mode of production itself. It was not less active in the old-fashioned bakeries than in the modern cotton factories.”*

## **Co-operation**

*“When numerous labourers work together side by side, whether in one and the same process, or in different but connected processes, they are said to co-operate.”*

*“By the co-operation of numerous wage-labourers, the sway of capital develops into a requisite for carrying on the labour-process itself, into a real requisite of production. That a capitalist should command on the field of production, is now as indispensable as that a general should command on the field of battle.”*

*“The directing motive, the end and aim of capitalist production, is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus-value, and consequently to exploit labour-power to the greatest possible extent. As the number of the co-operating labourers increases, so too does their resistance to the domination of capital, and with it, the necessity for capital to overcome this resistance by counterpressure. The control exercised by the capitalist is not only a special function, due to the nature of the social labour-process, and peculiar to that process, but it is, at the same time, a function of the exploitation of a social labour-process, and is consequently rooted in the unavoidable antagonism between the exploiter and the living and labouring raw material he exploits.”*

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C11, 12, 13, SV - Absolute, Relative, Co-operation.](#)



## Division of Labour

Karl Marx makes use of the original distinction between **Manufacture**, meaning the organised co-operation of many workers in a single workshop, and **Industrial Production**, which is the same, but with powered machinery. In modern usage, this distinction is not always clear. Marx in his Chapter 14 (**attached**) says this:

*“That co-operation which is based on division of labour, assumes its typical form in manufacture, and is the prevalent characteristic form of the capitalist process of production throughout the manufacturing period properly so called. That period, roughly speaking, extends from the middle of the 16th to the last third of the 18th century.”*

The rest of **Section 1** of this chapter is a description of division of labour under the early form of capitalism: Manufacture. Then, in **Section 2**, Marx describes the effect on an individual or “detail labourer”, and on production, as a consequence of division of labour. In **Section 3**, Marx looks at the gain that is made when serial production can be achieved, as opposed to batch or individual piece production.

*“The different detail processes, which were successive in time, have become simultaneous, go on side by side in space. Hence, production of a greater*



*quantum of finished commodities in a given time. [11] This simultaneity, it is true, is due to the general co-operative form of the process as a whole; but Manufacture not only finds the conditions for co-operation ready to hand, it also, to some extent, creates them by the sub-division of handicraft labour. On the other hand, it accomplishes this social organisation of the labour-process only by riveting each labourer to a single fractional detail.”*

In Section 4, Marx compares division of labour in a factory, with division of labour in society.

Section 5 is a readable essay on division of labour as treated by the bourgeois Political Economists, including Adam Smith.

In short, this is another chapter of “Capital” that you can conquer without difficulty.

**Image:** Walter Crane was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century artist who illustrated many socialist pamphlets. This particular work was done for May Day, the Workers’ Day, in 1895.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C14, Division of Labour and Manufacture.](#)

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#### Marx’s Capital Volume 1, Part 7b



Comintern

# Machinery

Marx begins this great chapter on “Machinery and Modern Industry” (**attached**; download linked below) by developing the idea of division of labour in manufacture, to the division of processes among machines.

*“A real machinery system, however, does not take the place of these independent machines, until the subject of labour goes through a connected series of detail processes, that are carried out by a chain of machines of various kinds, the one supplementing the other. Here we have again the co-operation by division of labour that characterises Manufacture; only now, it is a combination of detail machines.”*

*“As soon as a machine executes, without man's help, all the movements requisite to elaborate the raw material, needing only attendance from him, we have an automatic system of machinery, and one that is susceptible of constant improvement in its details.”*

*“Modern Industry had therefore itself to take in hand the machine, its characteristic instrument of production, and to construct machines by machines. It was not till it did this, that it built up for itself a fitting technical foundation, and stood on its own feet. Machinery, simultaneously with the increasing use of it, in the first decades of this century, appropriated, by degrees, the fabrication of machines proper. But it was only during the decade preceding 1866, that the construction of railways and ocean steamers on a stupendous scale called into existence the cyclopean machines now employed in the construction of prime movers.”*

*“Modern Industry raises the productiveness of labour to an extraordinary degree, [but] it is by no means equally clear, that this increased productive force is not, on the other hand, purchased by an increased expenditure of labour. Machinery, like every other component of constant capital, creates no new value, but yields up its own value to the product that it serves to beget.”*

The long last paragraph of Section 4 is a denunciation of the horrors of the factory system.

Section 5 shows the brutal effect of machinery on the working class from the beginning of machine-working, which effects have been felt all along and still are felt today, two centuries after the “industrial revolution”. Marx was an eye-witness to a great expansion of this system and a true witness of its terrible consequences for the working class.

To read the valuable sections of this chapter that have not been included in the PDF, please go to:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch15.htm>

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C15, Machinery and Modern Industry](#).

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## Marx's Capital Volume 1, Part 8



# Absolute and Relative

Chapters 16, 17 and 18 of Marx's Capital Volume 1 (**attached**) have very interesting things to say about absolute and relative Surplus-Value, and the old political economists' mistakes about it. Here are some of the points made by Karl Marx:

*"Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus-value. The labourer produces, not for himself, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that he should simply produce. He must produce surplus-value. That labourer alone is productive, who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, **and thus works for the self-expansion of capital.**"*

*"The production of absolute surplus-value turns exclusively upon the length of the working-day; the production of relative surplus-value, revolutionises out and out the technical processes of labour, and the composition of society. It therefore pre-supposes a specific mode, the capitalist mode of production,*

*a mode which, along with its methods, means, and conditions, arises and develops itself spontaneously on the foundation afforded by the formal subjection of labour to capital. In the course of this development, the formal subjection is replaced by the real subjection of labour to capital.”*

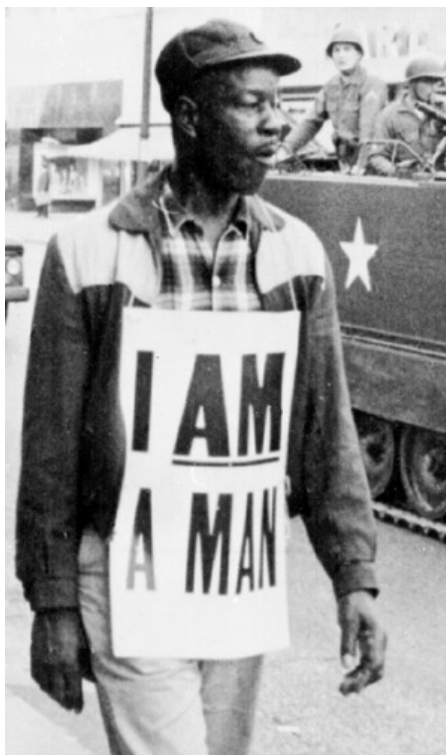
*“Assuming that labour-power is paid for at its value, we are confronted by this alternative: given the productiveness of labour and its normal intensity, the rate of surplus-value can be raised only by the actual prolongation of the working-day; on the other hand, given the length of the working-day, that rise can be effected only by a change in the relative magnitudes of the components of the working-day, viz., necessary labour and surplus-labour; a change which, if the wages are not to fall below the value of labour-power, presupposes a change either in the productiveness or in the intensity of the labour.”*

*“Bourgeois economists instinctively saw, and rightly so, that **it is very dangerous to stir too deeply the burning question of the origin of surplus-value.**”*

*“Capital, therefore, is not only, as Adam Smith says, the command over labor. It is essentially the command over unpaid labor. All surplus-value, whatever particular form (profit, interest, or rent), it may subsequently crystallize into, is in substance the materialization of unpaid labor. **The secret of the self-expansion of capital** resolves itself into having the disposal of a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labor.”*

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C16, 17, 18, Absolute and Relative Surplus Value.](#)
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## Wages

Part VI of Karl Marx's Capital, Volume 1 is devoted to wages. We will use the first three chapters, 19, 20 and 21 in this section (**attached**). The short Chapter 22, on international differences in wages, is one of the very few chapters from Volume 1 that we will leave out of this course, but you can still read it on the Marxists Internet Archive, [here](#).

On the first page of Chapter 19 Marx says, among other things, that the "*value of labour... is an expression as imaginary as the value of the earth*".

The commodity that is exchanged by the worker for money is not Labour, but Labour-Power. After that, the entire product of the worker's labour during the contracted time belongs to the boss, without any "compensation". The product of the worker's labour is greater than the payment given for the worker's labour-power. The difference is surplus-value. The extraction of surplus-value from workers in this way is the defining characteristic of capitalism.

Through these three chapters on wages Marx continues to discuss this basic point in different ways. The minimum price of labour-power is that which is sufficient to keep the worker going until the next day. Or, it may be calculated over a worker's lifetime, as Marx demonstrates here, and divided out to give an average day-rate. In

all cases, including piece-work, the capitalist pays only for labour-power, and at the minimum price that will ensure the return of the worker to the workplace, next day.

Marx finishes Chapter 21 by declaring that if, under piece-work, the workers think they can get more by producing more, the boss will remind them quickly of the true relationship, which is not payment for labour, or for the product of labour, but only payment for maintenance and reproduction of the worker's labour power.

*"The capitalist rightly knocks on the head such pretensions as gross errors as to the nature of wage-labour. He cries out against this usurping attempt to lay taxes on the advance of industry, and declares roundly that the productiveness of labour does not concern the labourer at all."*

**The image** above is a photograph of one of the striking workers in the 1968 "[Memphis Sanitation Strike](#)". Their union was AFSCME. Martin Luther King went to Memphis, Tennessee to show solidarity with the strikers, who were badly paid, badly treated, not recognised and racially discriminated against. King was shot dead by an assassin at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, where he was staying while supporting the strike.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V 1, C19, 20 and 21, Wages](#).

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#### Marx's Capital Volume 1, Part 9



Women workers (welders), USA, 1940s

# Reproduction and Accumulation of Capital

*“The conversion of a sum of money into means of production and labour-power, is the first step taken by the quantum of value that is going to function as capital. This conversion takes place in the market, within the sphere of circulation. The second step, the process of production, is complete so soon as the means of production have been converted into commodities whose value exceeds that of their component parts, and, therefore, contains the capital originally advanced, plus a surplus-value.”*

Thus Marx describes the working of capitalism, and he goes on to describe this cycle as the origin of capital. As chapter 23 goes on, Marx describes the position of the working class in terms that are easy to understand today. This chapter of Capital speaks of what has in recent years been referred to as the “accumulation path”. Marx concludes Chapter 23 by saying:

*“Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, **but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer.**”*

And he begins Chapter 24 by saying:

*“Hitherto we have investigated how surplus-value emanates from capital; we have now to see how capital arises from surplus-value. Employing surplus-value as capital, reconvertng it into capital, is called accumulation of capital.”*

Later on, Marx writes that the result of capitalistic production is threefold:

- 1) *“that the product belongs to the capitalist and not to the worker;*
- 2) *“that the value of this product includes, besides the value of the capital advanced, a surplus-value which costs the worker labour but the capitalist nothing, and which none the less becomes the legitimate property of the capitalist;*
- 3) *“that the worker has retained his labour-power and can sell it anew if he can find a buyer.”*

This, and the subsequent, is material that is familiar and widely accepted today.

*“Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets!”* says Marx.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C23, Simple Reproduction](#), and [C24, Conversion of Surplus Value to Capital](#).



## Unemployment

Chapter 25 of Marx's Capital, Volume 1, called [The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation](#), is about the effects of Capital on the workforce.

[Section 3](#) of Chapter 25 is concerned with what we nowadays refer to as Unemployment. Marx argues very directly and very convincingly in this section that unemployment is a necessary, constant, conscious and deliberate part of the capitalist system. He writes:

*"The over-work of the employed part of the working-class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to overwork and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working-class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists".*

In the light of what Marx says here, it can be argued that all protestations from bourgeois democrats that they are intending to provide "jobs" for all of the unemployed are false.

Early in this chapter, Marx writes:

*"[The] accelerated relative diminution of the variable constituent, that goes along with the accelerated increase of the total capital, and moves more rapidly than this increase, takes the inverse form, at the other pole, of an*



*apparently absolute increase of the labouring population, an increase always moving more rapidly than that of the variable capital or the means of employment. But in fact, it is capitalistic accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of labourers, i.e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus-population."*

In other words, whatever may be the intention, it is capitalism itself that creates unemployment. The stories about the birthrate being too high, the immigration too much, the rand too high, the interest rate too high, et cetera, are wrong. The truth is that unemployment is intrinsic to capitalism, as much as employment is.

Although we are obliged to do everything possible to increase employment and to reduce unemployment, yet there is eventually no escape from unemployment within the capitalist mode of production.

What is required, as Marx wrote in "Value, Price and Profit", is "abolition of the wages system", and the wages-system's replacement with another mode of production.

**Picture:** A South African mine worker (AP).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C25, Section 3 on Unemployment](#).
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Cato Manor, 1960

## Expropriation

In the first of the two vivid chapters 26 and 27 on primitive accumulation (attached), Karl Marx describes what is required to be in place before the system of surplus value can start pumping, and reproducing itself.

As Marx says, the myths around this origin are many, but the truth is written in blood and fire, the ruin of the feudal system, and the destruction of the semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois guilds in the towns of Western Europe.

These revolutions made possible the existence of “free labourers”, which is to say people with no means of production or subsistence, who must sell their only possession – their labour power – in order to survive from day to day. These are the working proletariat.

According to Marx, the capitalistic era began in the 16th century, but he does not say that capitalism was dominant or hegemonic at that time. Many of the bourgeois institutions that are nowadays taken as part of capitalism, such as double-entry book-keeping, banks, stock and bond markets, insurance, contract law and global freight navigation, were first developed under late feudalism, but especially in the 17th century, in the service of the big, bourgeois, transcontinental business of slavery, which is very different from capitalism.

How the “free labourers” historically came into existence is exemplified in the second of the two chapters, where Marx takes the “classic form” of this process as being that of England, starting from the 16th Century (i.e. 1501 to 1600). Clearly,

the creation of the proletariat was contemporary with the slave trade, while the latter was dominant. Capitalism only began to supersede and to actively suppress slavery after it had matured during the period 1500 to 1800, or in other words, not until after the “industrial revolution” of the late 18th Century, in England and in Scotland.

The process of eviction of people from the land is popularly known in England as “the enclosures” and in Scotland as the “Highland clearances”. To South Africans, one can say that the book describes processes of dispossession that are familiar even up to the present time. In the case of the Highlands of Scotland, one can also read that game parks (called deer forests) were replacing settlements of people from two centuries ago. The same thing is happening today in South Africa under cover of “green ecology”, and not only with game parks, but also with golf estates and horse-riding establishments.

With Chapter 27, it is not necessary to understand every local term, or to remember every local event. What is applicable still is the class struggle that underlay it all, the victorious bourgeoisie that came out on top, and the great, dispossessed, working proletariat that was left as the principal basis for capitalist extraction of surplus labour from then onwards - but also as capitalism’s inevitable gravedigger.

**Picture:** Brutal force, as in Cato Manor, 1960, is what has enabled the expropriation of land.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C26, 27, Primitive Accumulation, Expropriation, Capital.](#)
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Poverty map of part of London, 1889; darker areas show slums or “rookeries”

## Home Market

Marx's first concern in his description of Primitive Accumulation is to establish where the labour power came from, in the metropolitan countries where capitalism was established as a system for the first time, and where it eventually proved itself to be even more profitable than the slave trade that stole people from Africa and worked them to death on plantations in North and South America and in the Caribbean islands.

The expectation that the reader brings, on seeing the phrase “primitive accumulation”, is therefore not necessarily fulfilled. It is not the case that a hoard of money was first created, whether by plunder or by any other means, so as to purchase the commencement of capitalism. Rather, it was a case of piecing together the component parts of the capitalist system, which were: the bourgeois class that had arisen from the peasantry; the dispossessed “free labouring” proletariat, also originally peasants; and the ready market for commodities constituted by both of these two new classes, together.

This new abundance of available labour-power in the metropolis, personified in citizens without property, was the consequence of deliberate dispossession. It had the immediate, further consequence of producing what we now call “unemployment”, which was immediately criminalised as “vagrancy”. The



unemployment was an essential precondition for capitalism to arise, yet the bourgeoisie in its eternal, cruel hypocrisy, criminalised its own victims.

Our text today, downloadable via the link given below, is a compilation of Chapters 28, 29 and 30 from Marx's "Capital", Volume 1. It describes a time, long ago, when the slogan could have been "Capitalism is the future, build it now". The elements of capitalism were being assembled then.

Chapter 28 is an easy read detailing the legal steps in the original case, that of England.

Having shown where their labour-power came from, Marx at the beginning of Chapter 29 asks "whence came the capitalists originally?" This very short chapter answers the question in the case of the capitalist farmers, who were the necessary original capitalists, and who were already a historically-existing class in England by the late 16th century (and from which class later came, for example, [Oliver Cromwell](#)).

In Chapter 30, Marx turns his attention to the question of just how yet another of the necessary pre-requisites of capitalism came into being, namely the "home market". The very same peasants who had been thrown off the land into the towns to live in shacks had to eat, whether they were working or not, and the farms that they had left were still the only source of food. Thus was set in motion the relation of demand and supply, and also of concentration of industries into "manufactories" as opposed to the family-scale production of earlier times. These kinds of changes can still be observed as they happen, in South Africa today.

Good images of the slums of England, also once known as "rookeries", the equivalent of South Africa's present-day "informal settlements", less politely called "squatter camps", are hard to find. The illustration above is from the "Poverty Map" of part of the East End of London, prepared by or on the orders of [Charles Booth](#), a "philanthropist". The red areas are "middle class, well-to-do", light blue areas are "poor, 18s to 21s a week for a moderate family", dark blue areas are "very poor, casual, chronic want", and black areas are the "lowest class...occasional labourers, street sellers, loafers, criminals and semi-criminals".

Booth's survey found that 35% of London's huge 1889 population of between 5 and 6 million was living in poverty.

- **The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C28, 29, 30, Expropriated, Farmer, and Home Market](#).**



Mogadishu, 1993

## Colonialism

Here we are, at the end of Capital, Volume 1, the famous and huge book that so many people talk about and so few people read. We have read it. We are more fit to be cadres. We are more fit to be the vanguard. What remain are only the three last chapters (**attached**), which are not difficult to read, although as always they challenge us to be brave and to act, and action will never be easy.

In **Chapter 31** Marx states that the origin of the industrial (not farming) capitalist is in colonialism.

*“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre.”*

*“To-day industrial supremacy implies commercial supremacy. In the period of manufacture properly so called, it is, on the other hand, the commercial supremacy that gives industrial predominance. Hence the preponderant rôle that the colonial system plays at that time. It was "the strange God" who perched himself on the altar cheek by jowl with the old Gods of Europe, and one fine day with a shove and a kick chucked them all of a heap. It proclaimed surplus-value making as the sole end and aim of humanity.”*

This last describes in a single sentence, the state of affairs that Marx's book was written to expose; and Marx did succeed in exposing “capital” as “surplus-value making”.

Yet it appears that Marx did not deal with Primitive Accumulation in the sense that the phrase would nowadays be understood. Marx does not establish that capitalism required a ready pile of money or its equivalent. What he establishes is how the requisite class forces were brought into being, in Western Europe, in the revolutions that overthrew feudalism.

It is a mistake to think that a capitalist business requires “capital” in advance, if by “capital” is meant money in the bank, or land, buildings, equipment et cetera. It does require such things, but they do not make it a capitalist business as opposed to any other kind of project. What makes a business work as capitalism is a dual relationship. The first part of it is the relationship between the worker and the capitalist. The second part is the relationship of the capitalist with his market. If these two relationships do not both exist, or are faulty, then a capitalist business will not survive. But if they do exist, then the other means, including money, will probably be found without too much difficulty.

Marx shows clearly how the proletariat arose historically in Europe in the 16th century. He shows how the bourgeois class arrives on the scene. He shows how all the social building blocks including proletariat and market, are assembled, but not the money. In any case, capital is not money, it is a relation. Marx says so, directly, in Chapter 33. So the accumulation necessary for capitalism is not treasure, but is an accumulation of relationships; this is what we learn from the chapters in “Capital” on Primitive Accumulation.

Marx does not, in Capital, make a strong distinction between slavery and capitalism. He describes slavery candidly and without flinching from the horror of it. But he never discusses slavery in a comparative way, as distinct from surplus-value-extracting bourgeois-and-proletarian capitalism. Yet (bourgeois) slavery also started in the 16th century, or slightly before, and it ran on as an intercontinental Atlantic system for the next three hundred years, in parallel with the early development of capitalism proper, until Marx's time, such that the last end of bourgeois slavery was the cataclysm of the American Civil War, that was happening while Marx was writing Capital.

**Chapter 32** of Capital, Volume 1 contains about 1000 words in only four paragraphs. It is a full historical sweep from the past of slaves and serfs through present

capitalism to the future, when the expropriators will be expropriated. It resembles the Communist Manifesto.

**Chapter 33** is very interesting, but in spite of its title, it is not really about colonialism. Instead, Marx uses the example of part of one colony of the time, Australia, to make points about capitalism and to “discover in the Colonies the truth as to the conditions of capitalist production in the mother country”. Also note the very last paragraph of the chapter (and the book), which says:

*“We are not concerned here with the conditions of the colonies. The only thing that interests us is the secret discovered in the new world by the Political Economy of the old world, and proclaimed on the housetops: that the capitalist mode of production and accumulation, and therefore capitalist private property, have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of self-earned private property; in other words, the expropriation of the laborer.”*

*“...capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things,”* says Marx.

In the next part, we will commence a ten-week course on Marx’s “Capital”, Volumes 2 and 3.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Capital V1, C31, 32, 33, Capitalist, Accumulation, Colonialism](#).
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**Course: Karl Marx’s Capital, Volume 1**

**15002, Karl Marx’s Capital, Volume 1, Introductions Booklet, 2 of 2**

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